

TOMORROW ON THE MARCH

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PACIFICON

by the Guest of Honor

A. E. van Vogt

myself, for a purpose which I will come to presently. I came out of the mists of childhood in a small village in Saskatchewan, Canada, although I had been born in Manitoba. As I remember myself, I was quite an extrovert until about eight years of age. At that time I went to the rescue of my younger brother, who was being beaten up by a kid my size. Justice was on my side, but for once right did not triumph. The bully, who, as I have said, was no bigger than I, turned on me, and proceeded to give me the lmbabasting of my life. It was so unfair, so completely at variance with all the moral teachings I had received that I was devastated by the defeat. I who had been gregarious became a lone wolf. I took to associating with lone wolves, a Chinese boy in a local laundry, a Polish boy who had to mind cattle after school. I remember we used to sit on the side of the road until dark saying not a word to each other, and it grew so dull and drab for me that finally I discarded this particular boy, and for a long time kept to myself. Somewhere, at this time, I got hold of a fairy story book -- and my reading began.

When I was twelve, and we had moved to a pretty town in Manitoba, one of my school teachers took a fairy book away from me, and ordered me out to play. "You", she said, "are too old for fairy stories."

I was profoundly sensitive to her implied criticism that I was backward. It was years before I looked at another fairy story. And in a sense those two experiences symbolize my childhood. I would rush wildly along some path, and sooner or later would find myself stopped, and the effect would be almost a disaster. My parents were not even aware that such problems existed for children.

That wild growth, with its setbacks, is what I want to stress today. Most of us have come up like that, Joseph Stalin, Admiral Nimitz and you and me, particularly -- I have an idea -- you and me.

Childhood was a terrible period for me. I was like a ship without anchor being swept along through darkness in a storm. Again and again I sought shelter, only to be forced out of it by something new. Having looked over countless individuals, I have come to the conclusion that most people are like that. They arrive at adulthood, battered, shaken by the countless misunderstood passions of their bodies, and very seldom do they ever completely recover.

Why? What has happened? What has gone on inside the body and mind to disorganize it to the point where an individual of talent and intelligence arrives at the age of twenty-five lacking confidence in himself, with poor posture, poor eyes and usually a neurotic?

The key word at this point is thalamus. Don't be alarmed. My discussion will not be scientific, except in the sense that science fiction stories are scientific. I do feel however that, for those people who get a blank feeling when the word thalamus is mentioned, I should give a one or two sentence definition. Thalamus is the word Korsybski has made famous. It refers to the emotional center of the brain. It is much, much more than that, as I will show presently, so do not despise it.

Unfortunately, this thalamus is easily twisted, easily unbalanced. But you have all seen numerous examples of these twisted individuals, so I will not give any illustrations. This afternoon, I want to show you the other side, the wonderful side, the side of the thalamus without which civilization as we know it, could not exist.

The thalamus is the seat of the flowing movements of the muscles and of the mind. When a piano player sits down at his instrument, and his fingers race over the keys in perfect rhythm, when you see that, you are watching a man who has effectively used a facet of his thalamus. He has achieved a flow betwixt the muscles and the mind, with a minimum of obstruction in between. He doesn't have to think. The music comes out freely and easily.

A similar flow is achieved when a writer sits down before a typewriter and pounds out five thousand words between breakfast and lunch. He has achieved a balance within his thalamus that we must all attempt to equal. No matter what you do, whether commercial work, or artistic work, there must be a flow in your activity, an uninhibited way of doing things, or else you will not be the success that you can be.

A man who can acquire that flow in anything, acting, writing, selling refrigerators, firing a rifle, will be a success in his field, though it is still possible for him to become a dangerous neurotic.

The trouble with this type of success is that it is almost purely emotional in nature. It derives from the attainment of a rhythm within a narrow range. The person who has it sometimes makes a very great deal of money, and gradually he acquires the feeling that he is a great brain. He may be, mind you, but the flow is not a proof of it. Ever more swiftly his ego lifts from its moorings. Completely misunderstanding the basis of his success, he starts to apply the same "flow" yardsticks to municipal and national economics, to world affairs, to science, to things in other words that do not come into the thalamic field except insofar as everything on man's earth must be measured by man's emotional needs.

In a few minutes I am going to explain the only way this thalamic flow can be attained. First, one more definition.

The cortex is the seat of understanding. However, everyone, even the most emotional individuals, use their cortex day after day. I am going to give you a picture of the cortex which will startle you when you realize how often you, all of you, must have let it degenerate to its worst possible condition.

The cortex is roughly divided into two sections: The ANTERIOR and the POSTERIOR. The Anterior controls the mental and the Posterior the physical functions of the nervous system and body. Every human being uses both sections continuously to some extent. When you are writing a letter, doing bookkeeping, writing a story, you are using up the energy of the mental or Anterior section. When you are changing the baby's diaper, taking a walk, or just standing up, you are using up the energies of the Posterior or physical section.

Now, the trouble is, both sections contain only a limited amount of energy. You are born with that limit. You can use it up in being sick, you can use it up by worrying, or you can use it up in a normal healthy fashion, that is: utilize your fullest potentialities. But one thing you cannot do, you cannot augment your basic supply.

By this I do not mean that when you have exhausted the anterior and posterior sources, you have exhausted your basic supply. There is a secondary source, to which the anterior and posterior have separate access. This secondary source is known as the endocrinal glands.

An example will best illustrate how it works. You come home from work worn out. You decide to go to bed before eight. At 7:30, your girl friend or boy friend phones, bubbling over with enthusiasm, and would you care to go to the most wonderful dance. He or she just knows that you'll have the time of your life. What do you do? You start to say that you're all tired out, and you can't possibly make it. Then suddenly you stop. Because you no longer feel quite so weary. A warm current of excitement is pulsing through your body. You get up from the phone. You dress. All the tiredness is gone. You dance half the night, and finally, exhausted, you stagger home to bed.

What has happened? The posterior part of your cortex has tapped the endocrinal glands, and the energy drawn from there has given you a new lease on life, a second wind.

But now, you must beware. There's nothing left. Your wisest course is to crawl out of bed in the morning and phone the office that: "Boss, I'm sick", then crawl right back into bed, and stay there until ambition reasserts itself. You have exhausted all the physical energy you have, and you've got to get it back by the natural methods of rest and diet.

When you're young and healthy, the energy will come back

swiftly. As you become older, it returns more and more slowly. The time will come when you have to go away for long holidays, and it may be days, even weeks, before the energy will slowly crawl back into your system.

The following possibilities exist: A person may worry so much that they never use their anterior or posterior except by means of the energy from the endocrinal glands. This is particularly true of women, who, for some reason, worry more than men. But man, or woman, beware of misusing or using up too quickly the energy in your body. There is nothing more depressing than to see someone who had a magnificent supply of mental and physical energy as a young fellow, arrive at middle age, drawn and withered up by his own excesses of endeavor.

I must make clear that the supply of energy in your anterior has nothing whatever to do with intelligence. A person with an I.Q. of 90 may have more mental energy than a person with an I.Q. of 150. The energy you have measures the time that you can use your intelligence. As a matter of fact, a person with an I.Q. of 90, with plenty of energy, may acquire a thalamic flow of coordination, and so achieve considerable success. This explains why people who completely lack the ability to think in new and objective channels can make a great deal of money. It also explains why the world is in the mess it is in.

One more thing about this division of the cortex. The anterior and the posterior cannot draw energy from each other. You can exhaust your mental energy, and still have plenty of physical energy. In fact, the danger with a person who devotes himself to mental work is that he will continually use up mental energy but not physical. Odd things happen. Your body has to get rid of excess energy. You fidget nervously; your legs kick involuntarily, and so on. Watch that.

Science fiction readers have a greater desire to know new things than, say, western story readers. Sometimes they merely want to know them for the sake of knowing, but sooner or later it dawns on every individual in the world that his life work cannot be left to any haphazard methods. At 20, you feel as if you can try many fields. At thirty you begin to get a sense of desperation when you are no further ahead.

In order to be successful in any field, you must achieve, as I have said, a flow of productivity in that field. I want to tell you now the sure way of attaining that precious flow.

The good advice I have to give in this connection is primarily for single men and girls. Married people are to some extent lost souls. They have taken the fatal step, and now the rent collector comes around every month, and there are a few other items that do not permit of a "here I hang my hat here I

live" existence. Life just aint fair to married people. Not only does it cost twice as much to live, it costs three or more times as much. And the old nose has to be kept pretty close to the grindstone. This applies to both the husband and wife.

However, please do not think that what I have to say is completely inapplicable to these poor wretches. Nor must you imagine that what I have to say is absolutely new. Throughout history, countless individuals have proved every word, as you will realize in a minute. The trouble is, we are all so stupid in our youth that we haven't got the minute intelligence necessary to see what is visible within a few feet from the ends of our respective noses.

It's horribly heartbreakingly simple. Do you want to learn a language? Well, don't try to learn it after your day's work has tired you all out. Your brain just won't pick up the facts at any rational speed. After five years you will still be slogging along learning a little bit more vocabulary in one direction, and forgetting it in another. How should you go about it? Well, here are some methods.

Canvas in person all the language schools in your city, and ask for a job, preferrably a job where you live and work and eat on the premises. One of the conditions of your employment should be that you receive lessons, and that you be talked to as often as possible in the language you want to learn.

If you can't obtain such a job, find out from the schools if any of the teachers of the language you want to learn live in a boardinh house, go to that boarding house, and try to get a room. Keep going back. Make the landlady aware of you. If the teacher has his own home, go there and try to rent a room. Language teachers are not wealthy. I wouldn't be surprised if many of them do not actually operate boarding houses of their own.

Do you want to become a pottery manufacturer? Get yourself a job in a small pottery plant, as my wife did, at 60¢ an hour. A small plant, I say, because in such a place you get a chance to do everything. After a little more than three months, Mayne and another woman bought a kiln, and opened their own pottery plant. Of course they discovered they had a few things still to learn, but during their first year they not only paid their way and made a little money, but it would have taken them years of going to school to reach the stage where they knew every process sufficiently well to operate a factory.

After she had her plant established, my wife attended the course in ceramics at U.C.L.A..

Here we are in Hollywood, or at least we are in a suburb of Hollywood. All the major studios of the United States are located within an hour's driving distance of this room. Thousands

of people have come to Los Angeles for no other purpose than to break into the movies. Tens of thousands have had a hankering deep in their hearts, a hope that they would get a break, and so be discovered by some movie company agent.

What has happened to all these people? Why did they fail? What is the proper method for an absolute outsider to learn how to act, and so eventually get himself into a position where he will be noticed by the movies?

I am pretty sure that the method is not through being an extra, though it has happened and there is no reason why you should not supplement the method I shall now outline for you by becoming an extra.

Do you want to become an actor? Well, your first step is to learn the first principles of acting, so that when your big chance comes, you will be able to step right into the opportunity with confidence and poise. There are methods of doing this, and one of the longest and least likely to succeed is to try to learn acting evenings, after your day's work has tired you out. A variation of what I suggested for learning a language is the best method.

It happens that I know a chap who actually followed this method up to a point, and then, being a human being, he suddenly got a yen to see his family, and so he quit everything and headed for home in the east. But I'll guarantee the method will make you think of yourself as an actor within a year. That, you will agree, is very important. To be able to say, when somebody asks your occupation, "Oh, I'm an actor." Just think of how you feel about that now, and then imagine yourself saying those words with assurance. It's a big psychological step to take.

My friend got himself a job at one of the theatres which teach acting. He handled the lights, and for this he was paid the sum of \$5 an evening, PLUS the course in acting, which included appearing in the plays being put on. This theatre operates Sunday evenings as well as week days, so that he made approximately \$150 a month. His board and room were \$50 a month. What did he do with his days? He paid \$30 a month tuition to another drama studio, and acted in their plays, and learned by their methods during the day time.

Could anyone hope to do better than that? He acted and learned to act and thought acting 24 hours a day, and at the same time learned what went on behind the scenes, he learned the first principles of lighting, and so on.

If you want to succeed, then you've got to give your time and thought and effort to it day and night. You may think of a dozen reasons why you can't do it, you may be haunted by fears

and you may have tearful parents crawling down your back giving you words of caution -- but every day that you put off devoting 24 hours a day to the realization of your dreams so much longer will you be a slave, and eventually, such are the realities of the nervous system, you will have less and less courage to do what you must do.

Now this, as I have said, is not advice for married people, except in a kind of a way. A man who is married and has a family has to be cautious. He must have a second job cinched before he can give up his first. If he has a good job, if he is making money enough to support his wife and himself then he should be able to relax, and so learning new things will not be too hard. It is important that he do not undertake too much at one time.

Do not confuse your mind, by letting it run in a dozen different directions at once. My own experience at gaining a flow in writing science fiction is as follows:

As some of the older science fiction fans may recall, my first published science fiction story appeared in 1939. It was called BLACK DESTROYER, and it will shortly be republished in the Random House anthology along with two other stories of mine.

Black Destroyer established a rhythm in my mind. All in a row I wrote four monster stories using a similar pattern for all of them. Three of these stories, BLACK DESTROYER, DISCORD IN SCARLET and VAULT OF THE BEAST appeared in Astounding. The fourth story of the group, THE SEA THING, was published in UNKNOWN WORLDS.

When I had finished these stories, I was in a very dangerous position for a writer. I had to break into a new type of story, or go down into oblivion as many other science fiction authors have done. I did write a story called REPETITION, but that was only a stop gap. I had to have something new. I thought to myself, what I need is all the alien attraction of the monster stories, but not about a monster. About this time I happened to glance through an old story for boys entitled A BIOGRAPHY OF A GRIZZLY by Ernest Thompson Seton. That gave me the idea of what the story should be, and so the first chapters of SLAN were written. Fans are always asking me for details about SLAN, and the funny thing is that each time I can think of something else. Frankly, I didn't realize until I started to describe the origins of SLAN on various occasions how many thoughts I must have had at the time of writing. I had an impression that the story was written at a fairly blank period in my life, quite unexciting and unimportant from a personal point of view.

SLAN, like all my stories until recently, was written in

long hand, about as swiftly as longhand can write. It was written at night, and I used for a long period to turn out about two scenes an evening, and three scenes on Sunday, respectively 1700 or 1800 words for the week nights and 2500 on Sundays. My wife typed about 70% of it, making numerous changes, but still a lot of it went in pretty well as written. I was in the groove, producing smoothly and almost effortlessly and at the best speed, in my opinion, that is possible in long hand.

In other words by early 1940, I had attained a flow -- a rhythm in my writing. My thalamus was becoming trained. But one mighty error I made. I had trained myself in the wrong medium. Long hand.

In 1943 I proved, I think, the limit of salable production possible by the long hand method. I am probably kidding myself a little, but I have the impression that for at least 300 of the days of 1943 I worked from 12 to 14 hours a day. At the end of the year I had produced approximately a quarter of a million words. This compares with a million words a year attained by many writers who gained their flow, their rhythm on a typewriter.

It just goes to show you the importance of doing a thing the right way. Not only must you attain the all-necessary thalamic flow of production, but you must use the right tools, or you will suffer.

The personal experience which, at the beginning of this speech, I described as profoundly significant, began when my draft board tested my vision at 20/400 for my left eye and 20/600 for my right. It was that that finally impelled me to investigate the Dr. Bates method of sight without glasses.

As he, and subsequently, an eye training school, suggested, I took off my glasses, and started the long uphill fight of training my eyes back to normal. This had a profound effect on my brain. I could no longer write easily. In fact I could no longer write salable material. Everything sounded amateurish, improperly worked out, jerky.

I determined to fight it through regardless of cost. I reasoned that I had affected my vision centres, and that I must develop a new flow. I decided that it was a good time to take up other trainings. For thirteen years I had typed with two fingers, another bad habit.

In a week, by doing everything on the typewriter (I wrote mostly letters) I had my fingers through their initial training. After two weeks I could go as fast as I formerly had with two fingers. Development thereafter was steady. I had acquired a new training.

But my writing didn't improve. During the next seven months

I did not produce a story that was worth anything, as it stood. One of them I later revised and sold. The others I didn't even send out. They were torn up, wasted.

Just before Christmas of 1945 (last year) I began to feel a difference. I sat down and wrote over the shortest time in which I had ever turned out a story, the short story A SON IS BORN. Since then I have written approximately 160,000 words, this in spite of much sickness in the family.

It is possible that some of these stories will show the scars of my long purgatory, but you will agree it is an example of how the nervous system works, of how it reacts if you persist on a 24 hour a day basis.

During that period, I made many discoveries. Some of them I consider very important, and I sincerely hope that they will be received in the spirit in which they are offered.

We here in the far future year of 1946 A.D. are privileged to look back upon the ascent of man on his ladder of wars and ideas to the beginnings of the atomic age. We can see how man gradually trained himself to the use of new methods, each one of which made him the actual though not potential superior of his ancestor.

The superb legions of Julius Caesar defeated vaster armies because their nervous systems were trained to a certain type of coordinated fighting. The legions of Julius Caesar wouldn't have had a chance against the armies of the eastern Roman Empire of the Sixth century, and yet there had been no improvement in weapons. The improvement was in the training of the men. Sixth century soldiers depended on horses, and they had become so superbly skillful in fighting with every weapon -- firing bows, using spears and swords (without leaving their horses) that no force of equal or even much greater size had a chance against them.

In 1940, Hitler who had trained the nervous systems of his men to fight differently than the men of neighboring armies (who knew his weapons and had them too) could not be defeated until his methods were adopted by his enemies. In the end he was swamped by superior numbers of men and machines who had equalled his military tactics and strategy.

The tank existed before Hitler's method of using it. The airplane was ready to sink battleships at a very early date. But the nervous systems of the men had to be trained. When that training was complete, the superiority existed automatically.

Always, it is the nervous system that has first to be coordinated. Today, preliminary training methods exist to make supple

every part of the body. Here in Los Angeles are schools for everything you want. If you have the small amounts of money required, you can't lose. Everything is yours for the effort.

A few suggestions in this respect might be interesting to you. Many people are terrified of making speeches because they feel as if they won't be heard at the back of the room, and that they'll have to start shouting. Less than seven years ago, it would have been impossible for me to give this speech. My voice was back here, halfway in my throat. What did I do? I said, whenever it occurred to me, ME ME MO MO ME ME MO MO, and I said it from down here in my diaphragm. In public speaking, you have to speak from the region of your stomach, but project the words from as close to the front of your mouth as possible. If you spend a couple of two second periods a day saying mememomomememo, your voice will strengthen swiftly, so that you project it at will, without shouting.

You may be interested in a couple of sidelights on voice culture. Do you want to make your voice rounded and beautiful? Here's what you do. Drink an imaginary glass of water, tilting your head back, and sucking in the non-existent water. Duck your head back several times, taking half a dozen or more sips. It won't take more than two seconds.

Don't expect my voice to be an example. I did that for a while when I first heard of it, but then I forgot about it. But it is a part of all voice culture training, and is the real stuff.

What does it do? The average person, for reasons beyond his control, acquires a harsh voice fairly early in life. The soft and hard palate in the throat, instead of remaining in a healthy rounded position with respect to each other, rub against one another. This produces harshness. Drinking the imaginary glass of water soon restores the original roundness, and your voice gradually becomes more pleasing to the ear.

There are seven resonance chambers in your head and body. The nose, the top of your head, your lungs, your diaphragm and three in your mouth.

I think I have shown enough about the voice to show that it can be trained in two seconds, as you go along performing your daily tasks. Those suggestions about the voice constitute direct therapies for one function of the body.

There are four important intelligence centers in the head. The two eyes and the two ears. Behind each eye is a visual centre and behind each ear an aural centre. The largest portion of your intelligence comes as a result of the receptive powers of those four receptors.

I found that I always put a phone receiver to my left ear. I discovered that my right ear could not hear as well. It was a tiny difference, but that was the way my vision started to fail years ago. My right eye began to blur while my left eye could still see perfectly.

If I had known then about the Bates system of eye training as developed by modern teachers, and myself (yes, myself. I think everybody must discover things about the methods that are new) I could have fixed my right eye in a short time.

I am not going to describe the Bates system to you. You can borrow his book at the library and read it, or there are other books which you can obtain. My suggestions are on a different level than that.

Let me state the main principle: The nervous system cannot ever be properly organized if it is brought up in a blurred state. I'll give you an example. From my earliest years, whenever a pretty tune caught my fancy, I would hum snatches of it, or sing silly repetitious words of my own to the tune. I never quite learned the tune, and I might know one line of the verse.

That was all wrong. Everytime I did that I was contributing to the blurred state of my mind. What to do? Learn the words and the music. If you think of the words, the music comes almost automatically. And if the tune comes to your head, out pop the words. Association of ideas.

Learn the tune. Learn the words.

I'll give you another example. About six weeks ago I happened to use in a conversation with my wife the phrase "cleanliness is next to godliness". The moment I said them, I wondered, "Now just where did that phrase originate? I looked it up in my copy of Batlett's Quotations. And after I had read the explanation I thought to myself: So that's it. I then shut the book, and a few minutes later I was giving my wife a garbled version. It was so garbled it startled me. I thought, "Well, there I go again, blurring." I went back, and I read the explanation over once more with the intention of remembering it, so that I would always know clearly what it was about.

Absolutely, it worked. It took only a few seconds longer to remember it than merely to read it and forget it. The important thing about that kind of thing is: Don't try to remember everything. Just what strikes you, a piece of poetry, a line, a verse, a bright saying -- and don't ever look it up again. Memory must come instantly, or else don't bother with it. If you get it a little wrong, don't worry. Let it go. The absolutely vital thing about training the mind is that you do not strain after the knowledge that is available inside your cranium.

If you have children, and you hear them humming a tune, make them learn the words. If a child is interested in a certain phrase, or a piece of poetry, that and not some set poem is what they should learn. Make it easy for them. If it's only a single line out of an entire poem, ask them to repeat it. Be sly and clever. No forcing. Use methods which you have discovered in the past would work with your particular offspring.

In all the world of the nervous system what you do with your eyes is the most important to the health of your mind and body. However, it is not so much the fact that the vision becomes poor as the resulting eyestrain that is at fault. It is important to prevent that strain, and it just happens that the two-second method of preventing it will sharpen your brain beyond anything you can imagine, now. Here is the method, and do not dismiss it lightly. Here is what you do:

You are walking along the street. Take a good look at a moving object some distance ahead of you, a man or a woman or a car. Notice the color of their clothes, the way they walk, and everything about them. Then close your eyes, and let the eyeballs down, sag relax -- use any word you want to describe what you do -- but let your eyes down, and as you do, remember what you saw. Remember it in all possible detail. Then open your eyes, and go on your way. Do that whenever you think of it, and pretty soon the vision centers behind your eyes will become acute, out of all proportion to the two seconds of effort, which you have devoted to your nervous system.

I would like to point out one proof of this. I have only been using these methods a short time. Yet I am delivering this speech without notes. I assure you that I did not memorize my speech.

Well, World Science Fiction Conventioneers, that's pretty well what I have to say. For your ears, learn the words as well as the music of the tunes that catch your fancy and learn the phrases of poetry and sayings that appeal to you. For your eyes, look at some moving object as you are walking along, close them, let the eyeballs down, and for a second remember every detail of what you saw. That's all. I think you will be amazed at the way that will sharpen your brain.

I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to other science fiction writers. So many of them have stimulated me to better work, and it has been a pleasure to work in the same field with them. I have a particular admiration for Don A. Stuart, whose story "Who Goes There" made me attempt my first science fiction story, for Dr. Edward E. Smith who is probably my favorite author, for L. Sprague de Camp, L. Ron Hubbard, Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore and pseudonyms, the inimitable Robert Heinlein, and George O. Smith, and Ross Rocklynne, Ray Bradbury, Hal Clement, Clifford Simak, Philip Latham, Cleve Cartmill, Anthony

Boucher and others. There are really a tremendous number of good writers who have written or are still writing in science fiction and fantasy. My best wishes to all of them, and may they have many successes in the future.

I want to pay an especial tribute to John W. Campbell, Jr., as an editor. In my opinion science fiction would never have attained its present high standards without his careful and skillful guiding hand at the helm of Astounding.

And now, thank you for the honor you have done me. I want to wish the best of luck to you all for your endeavours for the future. And remember, Tomorrow Is On The March, for the individual. If you can get in step, you will still achieve all your dreams.

Thank you.

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